

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending and claims 7-25 are withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, claims 1-6 are amended. The courtesies extended to the undersigned by Examiner An at the interview held December 30, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the Remarks below and constitute the record of the interview.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori (U.S. Patent No. 6,034,718) in view of Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,522,789). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, neither Hattori nor Takahashi, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests two or more different capturing modes regarding the capturing of the image data, the capturing modes can automatically be switched in synchronous with or independently from progress of the image processing to position the optical axes and end faces of optical fibers, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 2-6.

The Office Action admits that Hattori does not disclose this feature. However, the Office Action asserts that Takahashi discloses this feature. Takahashi discloses in Figs. 11A and 12 and at col. 11, lines 45-63, that a pulse-generator 54 applies a memory address signal and a switch signal to the memory 53. Further, the pulse generator 54 applies a right-left switch signal to liquid crystal glasses 39 synchronously with the display of a right or left image. The memory 53 is one of the components of the image display timing corrector.

In response to a right-left switch signal, when a right image is displayed on the color monitor 35, the right-eye liquid crystal of the liquid crystal glasses 39 becomes transparent and the left-eye liquid crystal thereof becomes interceptive. When a left image is displayed on the color monitor 35, the right-eye liquid crystal of the liquid crystal glasses 39 becomes

interceptive and the left-eye liquid crystal thereof becomes transparent. Thus, a surgeon observes the right and left images, which are displayed alternatively on the color monitor 35, as a stereo image.

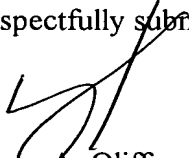
Takahashi does not disclose or suggest that capturing modes can automatically be switched in synchronous with or independently from progress of the image processing to position the optical axes and end faces of optical fibers. Accordingly, Takahashi does not disclose or suggest the features of independent claims 1-6. Accordingly, for reasons as stated above as well as those stated in the December 24 Request for Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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